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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS
OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 26 September 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, declared on 24 September 1997 that his Government would build 300 new housing units in a settlement called "Efrat" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While declaring this decision, the Prime Minister also said, "The land of Israel is constantly being built up before my eyes, and also before your eyes and you can see it". He also said, "We are building in Judea and Samaria and we are building in Efrat".

It is a well-known fact and established principle that all Israeli settlement activities are illegal under international law. They violate the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and many relevant Security Council and other United Nations resolutions. This recent Israeli decision, in addition to being illegal, comes at a time when the Middle East peace process is facing an increasingly endangered future and when many parties, including the United States of America, are trying to revive the process. It is very hard to believe that this decision was not made in order to pre-empt these efforts.

Further, in addition to the illegality of the Israeli decision, the use by the Prime Minister of the above-quoted outrageous and dangerous expressions is tantamount to negating any commitment to the Middle East peace process as well as the mutual recognition between the two parties. Speaking of the "land of Israel" invites speaking of the "whole land of Palestine", and speaking of "Judea and Samaria" invites speaking of the "Zionist entity". Those are

definitely irreconcilable with the peace process, the agreements reached between the two parties and the agreed-upon aim of the peace process, which is the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

As such, the situation is transgressing onto a dangerous plateau, which further necessitates that the international community take the requisite measures to ensure the immediate cessation of all illegal Israeli actions, as well as Israel's compliance with its contractual obligations.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this present letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36, 37 and 87, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations

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